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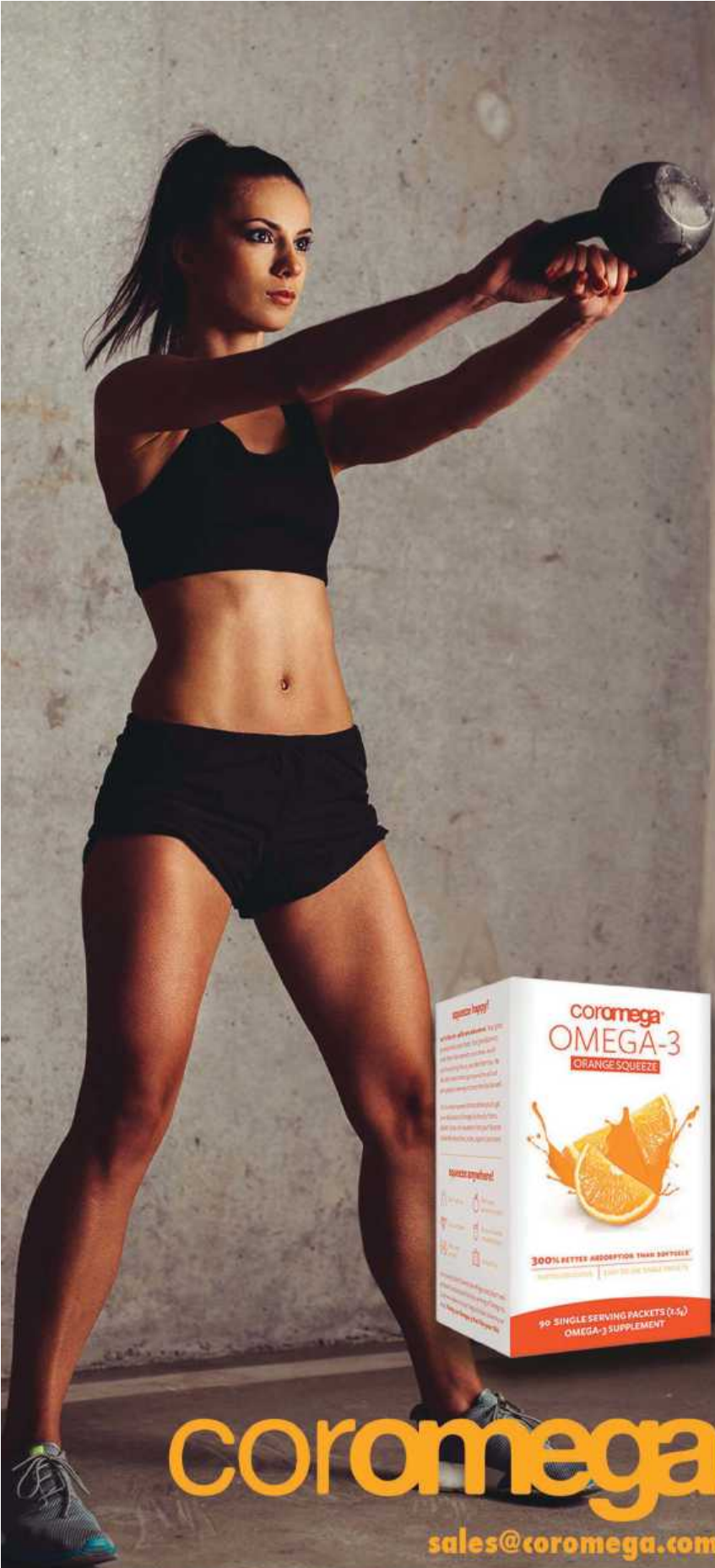
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# CrossTalk

DECEMBER 2015

BY JOE WUEBBEN







*“If you talk the  
talk, YOU BETTER  
WALK THE WALK.”*

— Chris Powell, who loaded every plate we had in our photo studio on the bar  
and proceeded to squat with it

# LIFTING LESSONS

>> Known kettlebell expert Dave Randolph's new book *Ultimate Olympic Weightlifting* (Ulysses Press, 2015) isn't being marketed specifically to CrossFitters, but it probably could be — particularly to box-goers desperate to bring up their snatch and clean numbers. In a recent interview, Randolph, owner of IronBody Fitness in Louisville, Kentucky, discussed what makes his book a worthy addition to any CrossFit library.

**How do you think your book can help CrossFitters specifically? (As opposed to non-CrossFitters who are into Olympic lifting.)**

The book is designed to help anybody, CrossFitters or not, work on basic technique and form and learn how to do the movements correctly. We're focused on trying to improve technique moreso than doing a quantity of work. We're looking at quality of work.

**You offer a 12-week Olympic-lifting program in the book. Can this program be combined with CrossFit training or should it be done on its own?**

It kind of depends on what you're doing in your regular CrossFit training. You wouldn't want to do both. You wouldn't want to come in and do the workouts in this book and then turn around and do something like "Murph." That would kill you. [laughs] Now, you could take parts of it — like the mobility and foam-roller work, corrective exercises and some of the main portions of the workout where we're working technique — and then do whatever CrossFit WOD you wanted to for metcon work. But that said, I included a conditioning portion in each workout, so you wouldn't necessarily have to go do your own metcon.

**So basically, your program follows a very similar format to a CrossFit training session, only with an exclusive emphasis on Olympic lifting. Is this accurate?**

Yes. I put in a lot of things for supplemental work because I know a lot of CrossFitters are going to want to do metcons. The first portion of each day is a warm-up that targets mobility work. Then it moves to drilling

basic technique with "five sets of three and three sets of five" type of stuff, focusing on different aspects of the lift. After they complete that, there's metcon-type stuff where they're working on, say, kettlebell snatches in a circuit with mountain climbers and maybe something else in there, too.

**On the metcon portions, what's your key for exercise selection? It sounds like you prefer to keep the barbell out of conditioning workouts, right?**

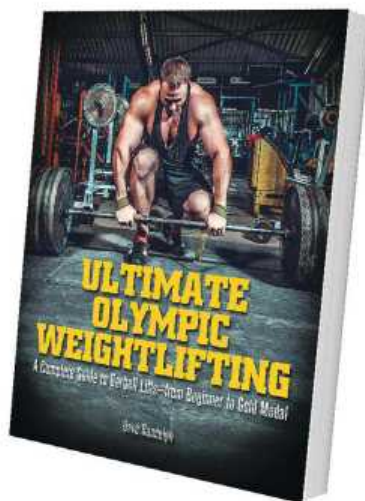
Yes. On the metcons, I like exercises like farmer's walks and bottoms-up walks thrown into the mix for active recovery

between the tougher exercises. We throw a lot of bodyweight movements in there, like mountain climbers, burpees, another exercise called the quad press and other stuff like that where you're using more bodyweight to work on core strength. And I tend to use the kettlebells to work alongside whatever participants did in the main portion of the workout when they did the Olympic work. So if they were doing snatches in the main

portion, I may have them do kettlebell dead cleans just to give it a different pull for working on explosive power.

**Olympic lifting is often associated with high injury risk — CrossFitters hear it all the time. What general guidelines in terms of volume, recovery technique, etc., do you recommend to minimize that risk?**

Well, I focus a lot in the book on self-assessment and corrective exercises. If people have, say, shoulder issues, they should know about it going in and probably shouldn't be doing snatches. So we focus a lot on mobility work to get things mobilized. I try to cycle the intensity level in terms of how much weight they're lifting as well as how much volume. In the more advanced sections of the book, we're basing loads off percentages of 1RM so we can cycle through that way. I program to train every other day at the most — so Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday with active recovery on the off days doing walking, swimming, bike riding or something like that.



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**WHERE TO GET IT** HandArmorChalk.com

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Fit List

# REC YOURSELF

>> It's never a bad idea to supplement your CrossFitting with extracurricular activities in the great outdoors. But let's face it: Some places are better than others when it comes to offering viable open-air exercise options. The online personal finance resource WalletHub recently released its 2015 Best & Worst Cities for Recreation lists, using such metrics as quality of parks, climate and accessibility of recreational facilities to rank the 100 largest U.S. cities. As you'll see, the most amenable locations aren't all warm-weather towns. Score a few points for the Midwest!

## BEST CITIES FOR RECREATION

1. Cincinnati, Ohio
2. Omaha, Nebraska
3. Scottsdale, Arizona
4. Tampa, Florida
5. Boise City, Idaho
6. Orlando, Florida
7. Minneapolis, Minnesota
8. St. Louis, Missouri
9. Reno, Nevada
10. Denver, Colorado

## WORST CITIES FOR RECREATION

100. Jersey City, New Jersey
99. Newark, New Jersey
98. Irving, Texas
97. Laredo, Texas
96. Hialeah, Florida
95. Chula Vista, California
94. North Las Vegas, Nevada
93. Fremont, California
92. Garland, Texas
91. Anaheim, California



## Numbers Don't Lie



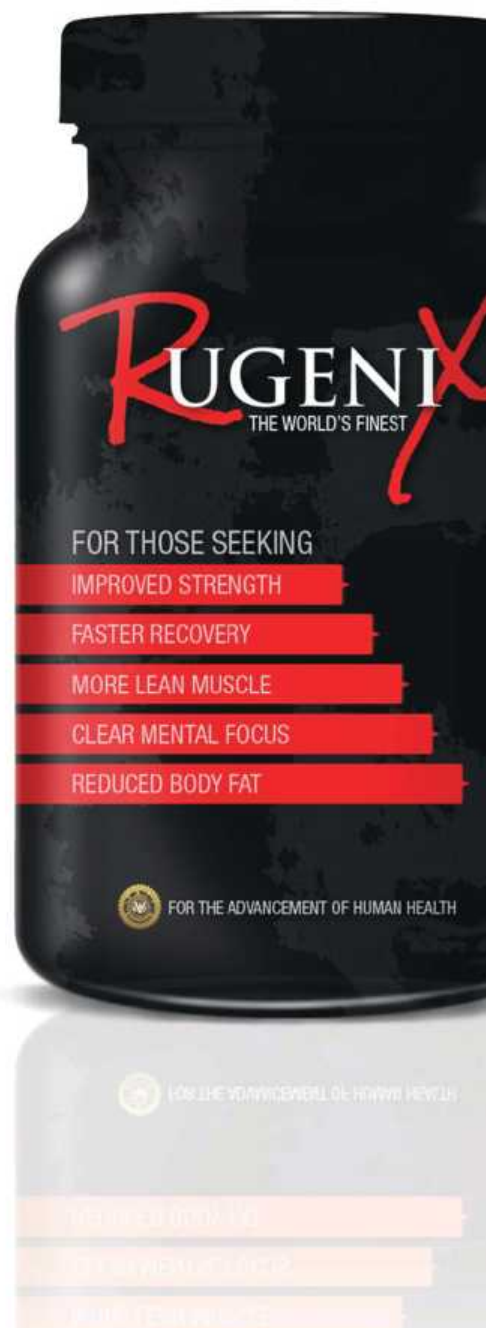
*Percentage of Americans older than 18 who drink coffee every day, according to the National Coffee Drinking Trends 2010 study (National Coffee Association)*



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Rugenix was created by Dr. Moris Silber, MD, Ph.D. Dr. Silber served as the lead scientist/ biomedical and nutrition advisor for the All-Russian Federation and Olympic Teams, as well as working with the U.S. Olympic Track and Field team and the Stanford University Women's Swim Team. In his quest for ultimate, legal sports performance Dr. Silber began researching and testing Creatine. Unsatisfied with the current market of Creatine due to its very poor solubility and oral bioavailability, as well as the false

claims that have made Creatine based dietary supplements extremely health hazardous. Dr. Silber has created his own formula, Rugenix. He has patented an entirely new method to produce the world's first ever functional oral Creatine. The patent (patent no.: US 8,624,053 B2) to produce stable dry ionic-bonded Creatine alfa-ketoGlutarate of high oral absorbability is the only known way to transport Creatine directly to the muscles for immediate post workout super-compensation



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## STAY HOME FOR DINNER

>> Fast-food meals are justifiably bashed as being detrimental to one's health, physique and athletic performance. But according to a new study published in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, sit-down restaurants should by no means get a pass. University of Illinois professor Ruopeng An (primary author of the study) believes "full-service" restaurant meals are just as nutritionally harmful as fast-food meals, citing the following data culled from the 2003-2010 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey as evidence: Full-service restaurant eaters consume 58 milligrams more cholesterol and 412 milligrams more sodium daily than at-home eaters, a larger disparity than when comparing fast-food eaters to at-home eaters (10 milligrams more cholesterol and 300 milligrams more sodium by the fast-food group). We can debate all we want about what's worse — Burger King or Outback Steakhouse? — but your best bet is always to purchase fresh foods from a market and prepare them yourself at home. That way you'll be better able to control what goes into your entrees, watch portion size and steer clear of that bloomin' onion thing.

### Eat This

## SAUCY SALSA RIB-EYE BONE-IN PORK CHOPS

>> Got a hankering for a pork dish that's leaner and healthier than a plate of bacon? Try this recipe, courtesy of the National Pork Board and Rey Darthard, executive chef for the NBA's Houston Rockets and author of the cookbook *Food Meets Athlete*.

### Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 cup white onion, diced  
1 cup green bell pepper, diced  
1 cup red bell pepper, diced  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
3 8-ounce cans salsa, such as La Preferida or Goya  
1 teaspoon chili powder  
8 bone-in rib-eye (rib) pork chops cut ¾-inch thick

### Directions

Prepare a grill to medium-high heat (about 450 degrees). Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add diced onions, peppers and garlic. Cook five minutes until browned and softened, stirring occasionally. Add salsa and chili powder and cook another five minutes. Reduce heat to low.

Oil grill grate. Grill chops over direct heat until the internal temperature reaches between 145 degrees (medium-rare) and 160 degrees (medium) on a meat thermometer — approximately four to five minutes per side. Remove chops from the grill and let rest for three minutes. Serve with salsa mixture. Serves 8.

**Nutrition Facts (per serving)** 200 calories, 21 grams protein, 10 grams carbs, 8 grams fat

**Serving Suggestion** If you're willing to splurge and aren't a strict Paleo adherent, Darthard offers this tip: "The Caribbean flavors and generous amount of sauce in this dish call for plenty of rice (preferably yellow rice) and black beans. If you wish, serve warm flour tortillas on the side to soak up every drop of the sauce."

For more delicious pork recipes, visit [porkbeinspired.com](http://porkbeinspired.com).





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## THE YOKE CARRY

Popular in strongman circles, the yoke carry traditionally involves carrying a weighted metal frame on your back. Though there are other variations, our focus will be on the traditional carry. There may not be a more effective way of moving the largest loads quickly than with the yoke.

By Logan Gelbrich, CF-L3 • Photos by Ian Spanier



### 1 THE SETUP

Set up the yoke so that there are 4 to 6 inches of clearance when you stand with the implement. Any less and slight deviations in balance during the carry can make the implement touch the ground, and any more clearance may eventually impede the loads that you can stand up to carry.

### 2 THE LIFT

With an erect posture, feet flat on the ground in a squat stance, and hips under the crossbar, drive through the floor to standing.





The most taxing part of the yoke is, in part, time under tension, so move the load as quickly as possible.

### 3 THE WALK

With your eyes on the horizon, take small, increasingly quick steps. Your knees are soft to keep the carry smooth and steps are “heel to toe” and small to avoid vertical oscillation. Think about walking with a wide base rather than on a “tight rope.”

### 4 THE EXIT

Though you can return the yoke to the ground the same way you stood it up, the most effective exit strategy at the end of a successful carry should be a slight lowering of your center of mass to unload the yoke and continue moving, leaving the yoke behind. □





## BAN THE BOUNCE

It's a common practice, but bouncing your bumpers off the ground may not be the best way to raise your score in a WOD.

*By Bob LeFavi, Ph.D., CSCS, USAW, CF-L1*

**I**magine this: You're in the middle of a deadlift WOD. You're smoking it, in your zone. Good form. Nice pace. You have your biomechanics and muscular activation down pat; you know exactly how to move and when to produce optimal efficiency. It has taken you a while to become this good at deadlifts, but moving the bar from the floor has now become second nature.

Then, all of a sudden, someone sneaks up behind you, reaches through your legs and — just as you ascend for another rep — pulls down on the bar. What would that action do to you, besides tick you off?

First, it would likely affect your bio-

mechanics. That is, you would have to alter your form to accommodate that change in resistance. You may get pulled momentarily downward or the greater contraction of your hamstrings may affect the angles of your hips or knees. Second, you would need to respond by producing more force than you normally would at that point in the lift so that upward motion could be maintained. And third, you could possibly strain musculature or a joint because you've loaded muscles with an excessive stress, one you were neither positioned for nor expecting. You are simply not anatomically, neurologically or muscularly prepared for that stress at that point in the lift.

It's not a scenario that you're likely to encounter in real life, but that same cascade is what happens when you bounce bumper plates off the ground in any upward lift in a WOD for time.

### “BOUNCE-INDUCED DECELERATION”

Here's a more likely scenario. An athlete is in the box, deadlifting a moderately heavy weight, perhaps 80 percent of one-rep max, for reps. In an effort to increase speed, she begins to bounce the plates off the ground. When the plates hit, they rebound, bouncing upward. This upward momentum reduces the amount of upward force the athlete needs to exert on the bar. To this point, all is good. That first inch off the ground is a breeze, but it doesn't stay that way.

Depending on the type of rubber in the plates, the material of the floor and the speed of descent, the bounce-induced upward momentum will cease when the bar is roughly 1 to 3 inches off the ground. That's around the point when the momentum of the bounce loses out to gravity and the bar slows. We will therefore call this phenomenon “bounce-induced deceleration.”

When the bar decelerates, it suddenly becomes functionally heavier. The weight is the same, but it feels heavier. Why? Because the athlete has lost the assistance of the upward momentum from the bounce, and she must make up for that loss by contributing more muscular force in order to continue the bar's smooth ascent.

It's here that we see the effect of this phenomenon. With bounce-induced deceleration, it's exceedingly difficult to maintain a smooth ascent. Just watch someone bouncing a heavy deadlift. The athlete appears to be jerked downward just after he comes off the ground — almost as if someone snuck up behind him and pulled the bar down.

There has been no real research to identify or quantify any risks involved with bouncing the weights off the floor, but in practice, we don't recommend it, particularly for beginners, because neuromuscular learning and efficiency may be negatively altered and the potential for injury exists.

In the meantime, there is absolutely nothing wrong with a steady, solid touch-and-go technique. □





**TEAR DOWN  
YOUR OLD RIG.  
THE TAKEOVER  
HAS BEGUN.**



**TITANAMERICAfitness.com**





## BUGGING OUT

What has six legs, a quartet of wings and is set to make its debut on your dinner plate? Prepare yourself for a swarm of products featuring cricket protein.

By Elke S. Nelson, Ph.D., CF-L1

It's a matter of simple mathematics. As the human population grows, so must sustainable food options. As the number of mouths that need to be fed and the environmental and financial fallout of what it takes to feed them continue to mount, investigating alternative protein sources becomes not only viable but also almost mandatory. And it doesn't get more alternative than bugs.

Of course, that's not particularly true for populations beyond our shores. While chowing down on bugs may not be the current norm in the West, a majority of other cultures around the world enjoy insects on the daily. And why not? They're a seemingly endlessly renewable food source that's full of lean protein, among other nutrients. Back in America, one bug in particular is being touted as the protein source of the future — the cricket.

Cricket protein is a complete protein source, containing all essential amino acids; its amino-acid profile is comparable to other proteins, like beef, chicken and pork. Based on percentages, crickets actually provide twice the amount of protein as does beef (and even more than that when compared to chicken, salmon and eggs). And protein is not the only nutrient the noisy creatures boast. Crickets are high in calcium and offer more than two times more iron than spinach and as much vitamin B12 as salmon.

Raising them is also much, much kinder to the environment than your average livestock. To yield the same amount

of protein, crickets require a measly 17 percent of the food and less than 1 percent of the water and land resources as livestock and produce just 1 percent the amount of greenhouse gases. It's estimated that 100 pounds of feed could provide 5 pounds of edible beef protein, 15 pounds of edible pork protein, 30 pounds of edible chicken protein, but 60 pounds of edible cricket protein. Crickets also require fewer natural resources than crops like soy, corn and rice. You do the math.

Convinced? Whether you're a sustainability junkie, just want a taste of the cricket craze for yourself or are an adventurous eater looking to partake in a cultural experience, these products offer a good starting place.

### CHAPUL CRICKET ENERGY BAR

In 2012, Chapul became the first company in the United States to make and use cricket flour in a consumer product. Salt Lake City local Patrick Crowley founded Chapul — an Aztec word that means "cricket" or "grasshopper" (the Aztecs were avid insect eaters; their practice of sun-drying insects, milling them into a flour and then baking a protein-dense bread out of them was part of the company's inspiration) — after becoming interested in insect protein as a solution to freshwater overconsumption by the agricultural industry. Staying true to its mission, the company invests 1 percent of all profits in water conservation in the regions that inspire its bars.

Chapul offers four non-GMO, gluten-free, soy-free and dairy-free bar varieties. While the macronutrients and ingredients vary widely among flavors, you're guaranteed at least 5 grams of high-quality cricket protein per bar. [chapul.com](http://chapul.com)

### EXO CRICKET FLOUR PROTEIN BARS

With the tag lines "Crickets are the new kale" and "Crickets are the gateway bug," Exo has piqued a lot of interest since its beginnings in January 2013, when two Brown University students ordered 2,000 live crickets and started experimenting. After graduating, Exo founders Gabi Lewis and Greg Sewitz moved to New York City, where they each sacrificed other career opportunities to fulfill their passion for insect protein and its role in the future of food. Exo offers bars in four comfort-food flavors: apple cinnamon, blueberry vanilla, cocoa nut, and peanut butter and jelly. Each bar provides 10 grams of protein and 40 crickets (an estimated five per bite), and it is also free of gluten, grain, soy, dairy and refined sugars. [exoprotein.com](http://exoprotein.com)

### CRICKET FLOURS PROTEIN POWDER

Founded in 2014 by Charles Wilson and Omar Ellis, Cricket Flours' mission is to shift away from animal sources of protein powder and look to a high-quality, more sustainable option — crickets. Among Wilson's criteria for this alternative source of protein and nutrition: It had to be gluten-free and free of unnecessary processing and additives. The resulting cricket product is sourced in North America and made using premium fine-grain milling processes that increase shelf life, nutrition and consistency. Add Cricket Flours to your favorite recipe to provide a natural boost of protein (7 grams per 15-gram serving), calcium, iron, fatty acids, and vitamins B12 and B6. [cricketflours.com](http://cricketflours.com) □





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## CROSSFIT GROUNDSPPEED

Co-owner Bob LeFavi, Ph.D., CSCS, USAW, CF-L1, explains how and why his Georgia-based team opted for property ownership.

*By Joe Wuebben*

### What's unique about your box?

We did something few boxes do: We bought land and built our own building. After two-and-a-half years of a successful CrossFit business, we simply got tired of paying someone else rent. When we really looked at it, it was costing us about the same amount to rent as to pay a mortgage. So now, even if we had a bad month and just made payroll and bills, we'd still benefit by building equity in the property. But in actuality, that hasn't happened. We're doing much better than just paying our bills because we can do more with our box now. It wasn't easy, but we went about it the right way from the start.

### What is the right way, in your opinion?

Start with what I call "the talent" — highly qualified coaching. As a college professor, I simply can't be there to run anything, and I recognize that limitation. So if I'm going to have anything to do with owning a box, there needs to be a "personality" there with exceptional talent. And that's my business partner Darcy Giaquinto, a local, well-established and popular trainer who not only became a great CrossFitter but was also interested in opening a box.

### How is your ownership stake split between you and Giaquinto?

Having owned a Gold's Gym for 15 years, I understood the dynamics in ownership. I knew that Darcy should not only be the majority owner, but that she should also have ultimate control over the business of the box. To get in her way is to limit her abilities and creativity. That allowed Darcy to flourish, to grow the box as she saw fit, and the box has done extraordinarily well.

### Has Darcy as head coach affected the clientele?

Yes, definitely, and in a very positive way. Before opening, Darcy grew her clientele in various locations (a gym, a garage, etc.). Soon, she became known as an excellent trainer, and she had a clientele that would follow her anywhere. When she transitioned to CrossFit, her group came with her and, by and large, is still with her. The relationships she has built over the years with the local fitness commu-

nity has paid large dividends. I hear about people walking into communities they have no history in or ties to and trying to open a box. Regardless of how good that business plan looks on paper, for the life of me, I can't imagine doing that. CrossFit relies so much on personal relationships, and relationship building takes time and trust.

### Do you feel property ownership is going to be an increasing trend for CrossFit gyms?

I certainly hope so. It tells the community, "We're here to stay." I think it creates a sense of permanence and stability among the members, as well.

### Does owning your space allow you to keep your monthly dues a little lower than if you were leasing?

Yes, without a doubt. We have some of the lowest rates around because we have much better control over our expenses. We happen to be in a Savannah [Georgia] suburb. And what I've come to realize is that CrossFit boxes are destination facilities. People will drive for that unique experience. So I envision more CrossFit owners prospering by offering lower rates with their own facilities outside of city centers where the purchase prices are high.

### You mentioned that you owned a Gold's Gym for 15 years. CrossFit gyms are obviously very different from "globo gyms" like Gold's, but in what ways are they similar?

You're right, it's hard to compare what customers encountered in Gold's Gym of Statesboro with CrossFit GroundSpeed. But there's an aspect that's very much the same: The more athletes feel a connection to the owners and trainers, the more likely they are to come back. And the more likely they are to come back, the more likely they are to make significant performance changes. And before you know it, the word catches on. □

### BOX STATS

**OWNERS:** Darcy and Michael Giaquinto; Bob and Sue LeFavi

**LOCATION:** 616 Town Park Drive, West Rincon, GA 31326

**YEARS IN OPERATION:** 3

**NUMBER OF MEMBERS:** 185

**NUMBER OF COACHES:** 1 full-time, 8 part time, 4 CrossFit Kids coaches

**FACILITY SIZE:** 4,000 square feet for training; 1,000 square feet for office space and restrooms/showers

**MEMBERSHIP FEES:** \$90-\$115 per month (depending on frequency)

**MORE INFORMATION:** CrossFitGroundSpeed.com





## **TRAIN//PERFORM**

### BIOCERAMIC™ AU9.5 TECH PANTS

Introducing a NEW look to the treasured Bioceramic Tech Pants, the AU9.5 Performance Tech Pant is engineered for endurance and recovery. This technology is based on a proprietary infused fabric with natural Bioceramic compounds that emit Far-Infrared into the skin; reducing resting energy expenditure and improving cardiovascular recovery following exercise.

**KENNETH LEVERICH**  
VTEAM ATHLETE

**VIRUSINTL.COM**



## 3, 2, 1, GIVE!

What do you get a CrossFitter for the holidays? Chocolate can be a minefield (depending on dietary preferences); flowers die. There's always a Rogue gift card or, if you're feeling really swish, a contribution toward a monthly box membership. Or you can pick one of these ready-made gift sets.

By Sherri Gamblin ■ Photos by Patrick Sternkopf

## LOOKING GOOD

Dump last year's sweat-stained garb and level up from your fingers to your toes.



### ● Virus Stay Cool Compression V2 Tech Shorts

FIND: [virusintl.com](http://virusintl.com)

PRICE: \$52

### ● World's Softest Game Knit Socks

FIND: [worldssoftest.com](http://worldssoftest.com)

PRICE: \$15

### ● Lalo Grinder

FIND: [lalotactical.com](http://lalotactical.com)

PRICE: \$130

### ● Rogue Barbell Club T-Shirt

FIND: [roguefitness.com](http://roguefitness.com)

PRICE: \$25

### ● Qalo Silicone Rings

FIND: [qalo.com](http://qalo.com)

PRICE: \$16-\$25



# ON THE GO

Help your favorite CrossFitter survive when out of the box and away from home.

## BooginHead Squeez'Ems Reusable Food Pouches

**FIND:** booginhead.com

**PRICE:** \$8 for two

## MODAVate Innovator 500 Insulated Bag

**FIND:** modavate.me.com

**PRICE:** \$80



## O-Venture Big O Key Ring

**FIND:** o-venture.com

**PRICE:** \$28

## Denon Exercise Freak In-Ear Headphones

**FIND:** denon.com

**PRICE:** \$200

# WORKING HARD

Whether you're looking for a bit of extra support in the box or for a couple of at-home options to bolster your training, this gift set has something for everyone who enjoys working (out) hard.

## RockTape KneeCaps

**FIND:** rocktape.com

**PRICE:** \$60

## Vulcan Strength Slam Ball

**FIND:** vulcanstrength.com

**PRICE:** \$55

## Gripads

**FIND:** gripads.com

**PRICE:** \$15

## VersaGrips

**FIND:** versagrips.com

**PRICE:** \$45-\$57

## HumanX by Harbinger X4 Speed Rope

**FIND:** humanxgear.com

**PRICE:** \$25



# RECOVER

Being a badass in the box doesn't mean you have to be stiff, sore or scarred. Help your favorite CrossFitter get back to her WODs sooner with these products.

● **Toba Sore Point**  
**FIND:** tobaremedies.com  
**PRICE:** \$28

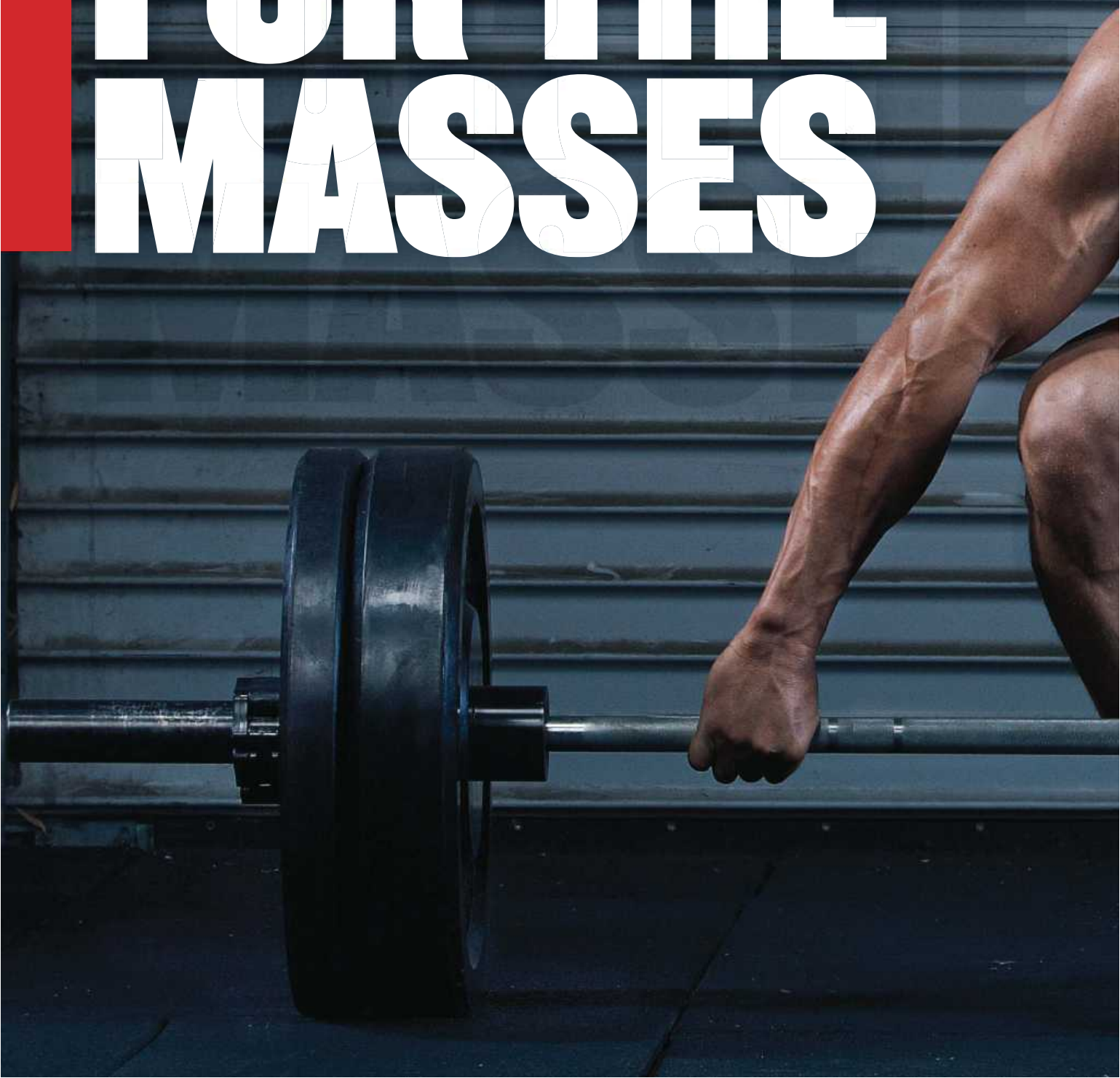
● **Rehband Compression Calf Sleeves**  
**FIND:** rehband.com  
**PRICE:** \$28

● **Marc Pro Plus Electrical Muscle Stimulation Device**  
**FIND:** marcpro.com  
**PRICE:** \$950

● **KnotOut Mobility Roller**  
**FIND:** theknotout.com  
**PRICE:** \$30

● **Ript Hand Care System**  
**FIND:** riptskinsystems.com  
**PRICE:** \$22

# CROSSFIT FOR THE MASSES







If you want proof that anyone can do CrossFit, look no further than ABC's *Extreme Weight Loss*. For the past five seasons, trainer Chris Powell has used CrossFit to bring broken people back from the brink. That's no accident. By his own admission, Powell has drunk deep of the CrossFit Kool-Aid and has used it exclusively in his personal programming since 2008. We sat down with him to hear the details of his own fitness journey.

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BY JORDANA BROWN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER LUEDERS

# CHRIS POWELL

*believes passionately in two things: the ability of the human mind and body to transform and CrossFit. He came by these beliefs over the course of a long career in the fitness industry and now entwines them to great success on ABC's Extreme Weight Loss, the show on which he and his wife Heidi Powell guide morbidly obese people through what they call a transformation journey, a grueling experience that involves a lot of exercise, learning an entirely new way of eating and dumping a ton of emotional baggage.*

*The result is that people who once could barely move lose close to half their bodyweight — often upward of 150 pounds — in the span of a year. And at the center of that process is CrossFit.*

*CrossFit is very much at the center of Powell's life, too, but it wasn't always that way. His own fitness journey began in high school.*

I was without a doubt the tiniest kid in school growing up, and we're talking from kindergarten through high school. I didn't hit my growth spurt until junior year of high school, and that lent itself to a fair share of bullying and created image issues for me when I was growing up. But it really made an impact when I tried out for football my sophomore year. I loved football more than anything, but I was the smallest kid on that field by at least 25 or 30 pounds, and within two weeks, those kids quickly let me know that I was not going to be a part of their team. It was my first year at a new school, we had just moved, and I *wanted* to be part of that crowd, I *wanted* to be popular, I *wanted* to play the sport that I was so passionate about. So my parents would drive me to camp every day, and every day I would come home just beat up. I spent half my time at football camp on my back, looking up at the sky trying to count the stars. After two weeks of that, I quit. That's something I still regret to this day — that I quit football.

On about the third day of school, I came home and all the furniture was cleared out of our living room and there was a weight set right there in the middle of the floor —

and the TV, thank goodness the TV was still there. So I found creative ways to sit on the weight set and watch my favorite television shows for a couple of weeks until I was

like, *Well, I might as well give this thing a try.* I found myself underneath the bench press, you know, struggling to get the bar — just the bar — up. After a couple of weeks, it became a challenge. I tried to do five. I'd try to do eight and then I'd try to do 10. And sure enough, it became easier and easier, and then the challenge became how much more can I do every single time and it just became this progressive overload. It was wild because after about two months of that, I was looking in the bathroom mirror, you know, scrawny 10th-grade kid, and I'm flexing in the mirror and I saw a muscle. And that was it.















Even though I was still small in stature, I felt empowered because it felt like all my power had been taken away from me, and that's what gave it back to me. I realized if I work hard, yeah, I might still be the smallest kid out there, but I can be the strongest and I can be the fastest and I can be the most explosive. And that's when everything began for me.

So from 14 years old on, I was passionate about everything fitness. I grabbed all the different muscle magazines. I didn't know any of the actual science behind it, but I knew gym science, so I could tell you how to get bigger biceps in 24 hours and, you know, all the "catchy" stuff. But nevertheless I'm reading this stuff and I'd pick up just tidbits of information, and after a while, working out at home just didn't cut it anymore. I needed more weight. So I started working out in the school gym after school with all the football players after the season ended. Before you knew it, they were coming to me, asking me, "How do I increase my bench?" "How do I run a faster 40?" "How do I increase my vertical jump?" So, without realizing it, I started training when I was 15 years old. I was just the go-to guy because I would tell them about what I had read in the magazines. That's what started everything. Every single day after school, my parents would pick me up an hour and a half, two hours after school ended so I could get my time in at the gym, I could do my work, I could train some other people and then I could get home. It was my passion, but I didn't even realize it.

*Whether he realized it or not, Powell followed that passion to college, pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in exercise science*

*and kinesiology at Arizona State University. He also continued to train people while in school, despite planning for a career as a commercial pilot. The furloughs and firings that followed 9/11 thwarted that plan and delivered Powell right back to the gym, where he got a job as a trainer, eventually founding his own personal-training business and opening his own studio. And then CrossFit happened.*

Fast-forward to 2008. A buddy of mine, another trainer at the studio, told me he was finding these awesome workouts online and told me to check out CrossFit.com. It was about May 2008 and he and I jumped on the site together. He pulls up this one workout and he's like, "Check out this workout right here. You just do 21 reps, 15 reps and then you do nine reps. It's super easy!" I was like, "What, a superset? That's it? Just three sets of each one? OK, no problem!"

So we went to the local big-box gym, and I'm surprised we didn't get kicked out when I dropped my 95-pound barbell on the ground and stumbled into

the bench press because I literally thought I was going to pass out. That was about 10 minutes into "Fran." It was the most horrific 12-and-a-half, 13 minutes of my life. And I had muscles! I looked like I could do a lot of damage, like I could put in some work. Sure enough, a quick couplet of 21-15-9 put me on my back for probably a good 30 minutes. It was just a whole new animal.

At the time, I had just finished my CSCS program through the National Strength and Conditioning Association, so I printed out the whole CrossFit philosophy from the *CrossFit Journal* and decided to try to poke holes in it from a scientific standpoint. After three days, I emerged from my cave, holding it up, like, "This is brilliant! Why didn't somebody think about this earlier?" It's fast, it's effective, it gets a neuroendocrine response that elicits change from the body, it's a massive stimulus for hypertrophy, strength, power, speed. And then, on top of it, it's got the most important component of fitness ever, which is that it's fun. It's gamified, and that's what changed everything. The moment you put metrics on it, it

I drank the Kool-Aid because **CrossFit was brilliant**, it was fast, it was easy ... no, it wasn't easy. It was fast. It was challenging, it was fun, instant gratification, quantitative proof, metrics, results. I mean, **it's everything that you want in fitness.**

gamifies it. Whether you're competing against yourself or you're competing against other people, it makes it fun. Training became fun again. It just lit a whole new fire under me, and I've been hooked ever since.

**Back in 2010, if you'd been doing CrossFit on your own for a while and were ready to level up, you'd go to the main site and see when — and where — the next Level-1 seminar was. That's exactly what Powell and his wife Heidi did.**

Level-1 seminars were few and far between. So we took a flight to Santa Clara, California, and we did our L-1 in NorCal with Adrian Bozman and Jason Khalipa and company. We had a lot of fun. Because CrossFit had yet to boom at that time, the whole crew from Headquarters drove over from Santa Cruz because it's a 45-minute ride, so we were just hanging out with the whole Headquarters crew.

**Meanwhile, Powell was in production on a new TV show, the idea for which was sparked by his experience rehabilitating a 600-plus-pound man named David Smith. Smith had reached out to Powell in 2003, when Powell was appearing as a fitness expert on Good Morning Arizona, and his plight struck a chord with Powell, who ultimately helped Smith lose upward of 400 pounds. Smith's before and after photos, posted on Myspace, went viral and resulted in significant media coverage, including a TLC-produced documentary about the pair. Called The 650-Pound Virgin, it caught the eye of a Los Angeles production company, which recruited Powell to create a new weight-**

At one point, I was volumized. I looked the part. I looked big, I looked strong, I looked fit. I had some strength, but I wasn't fit. **And sure enough, the more I trained in CrossFit, I got denser.** My muscles started taking different shape — they started taking **a fit kind of shape.**

**loss TV show. The show, now called Extreme Weight Loss, chronicles the Powells' efforts to assist morbidly obese people in losing weight. One of the most critical ways in which the Powells do that is by introducing participants, on day one of filming, to CrossFit.**

**After 30 days of intensive training on-site with the Powells, participants return to their homes, armed with training and nutrition programs, a weight-loss goal and a membership to a box in their hometown.**

What we do on the show is not weight loss. It's rehabilitation. And in rehabilitation, it's really important that individuals who are looking to change their lives change their environment because they're surrounded by triggers — huge social cues that can be dangerous slippery slopes for them. The beauty of doing what we do is that as soon as we start working with an individual, we say, "Let us introduce you to something called CrossFit." And we've done this from season one.

The thing is, in the weight-loss journey, people need gratification. They need to know that the effort they're putting in is paying off. But the human body changes in slow motion. A lot of times, if you're fixated just on that

number on the scale, you get so up in your head and it makes the process so long and drawn out because what you see on the scale totally dictates how you feel for that day. But what if the scale didn't move but you just PR'd in your back squat or your 500-meter row or you just did 12 rounds of "Cindy" in 20 minutes or a four-minute "Grace"? CrossFit helps us with that paradigm shift. The participants stop focusing on just being skinny and start to see the beauty of being fit.

But without a doubt, the most important aspect of the whole thing is the community. These individuals are changing their lives, and a lot of them are changing their social structure, as well, and CrossFit allows us to put them in with other health-minded people, other people who want to focus on increasing their quality of life and their well-being, just like these individuals did. And that's the reason I love CrossFit so much — the camaraderie that's built and the friendships and the brotherhoods and the sisterhoods and the family that's there when you walk through those doors. □

*For more from Chris Powell, including his favorite CrossFit exercises and the secret to achieving lifelong transformation, go to [theboxmag.com](http://theboxmag.com).*





## BY THE BOOK

*Extreme Transformation: Lifelong Weight Loss in 21 Days* (Hachette, 2015) is the first book that Chris Powell has co-written with his wife Heidi Powell. It compiles more than a decade of meticulous observation of the process of losing significant weight. "We have taken notes on every individual we have transformed," Chris says. "We found

all these common denominators and mapped the psychological and the physiological journey." *Extreme Transformation* is "far beyond a diet and exercise book" and promises to help anyone who is looking for help losing weight — whether it's 20 pounds or 200 pounds — and keeping it off. "It teaches you all the secrets that we've learned through the process and maps them all out, top to bottom," Chris says. "It's not just about losing weight; it's really about keeping it off forever."



Athlete: Chad Melton



# BOUNCING OFF THE WALLS



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*Ten biomechanical and training tips you  
can use to make wall balls suck less.*

BY BOB LEFAVI, PH.D., CSCS, USAW, CF-L1 • PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER LUEDERS

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here's a phrase written on the whiteboard in my box that has been there for an entire year. It stays there because members won't let me forget the day when, with a wall-ball WOD programmed, I took stock of the large number of athletes in attendance and inadvertently yelled, "We may not have enough balls for this WOD!" One athlete, choking back tears of laughter, decided to memorialize the statement, and there it has remained ever since.

As much as that double-entendre evoked (and continues to provoke) laughter, it could very well also be taken at face value. Fact is, a wall-ball WOD takes all you have. You enter it knowing that soon your lungs will be on fire, and the reverberating thought in your head will be constant: "Will this never end?"

But it really doesn't have to be that miserable. There's an optimal technique to wall balls (also called "ball shots"), and learning it can improve your efficiency to the point that, while you may never look forward to wall balls, you will at least no longer have a visceral, nauseated reaction to them. These 10 tips should get you there.



## BIOMECHANICAL EFFICIENCY

### 1 Vertical Forearms

One of the biggest biomechanical faults that can occur when performing wall balls is allowing the ball to draw the arms downward. When this happens, the athlete loses time extending and flexing the elbows, and expends much-needed energy pulling the ball back up to propulsion height.

To avoid this costly error, focus on keeping your forearms vertical from the time you catch the ball until the moment it leaves your hands. One cue is to think of your forearms as pointing to the target. Another is to concentrate on keeping your elbows under your hands.

### 2 Ball Positioning

Remember, the ball is a weight. And like any weight, it gets heavier as you extend it away from your body (in technical terms, as the "resistance arm" becomes longer). Therefore, always keep the ball as close to your body, chin and face as possible.

However, finding the sweet spot at which you can catch the ball close to your face without it smashing you in the kisser is more art than science. The best way to find it is to hold the ball at upper-chest height and position your hands placed on the side of the ball toward the bottom, much like you would for a kettlebell goblet squat.

### 3 Upright Torso

In order to keep your forearms vertical and the ball in close to your body, you've got to maintain an upright torso. Concentrate on keeping your chest high and maintaining the lordotic curve (natural curve) in your lower back.

As soon as you lose the upright torso and lordotic curve, you'll drop the ball lower and away from you — expending more energy and increasing your time. And worst of all, you'll scrunch over. That scrunching forward (aka spinal flexion) creates two problems. First, your lower back will begin to ache as a result of working far too hard to extend the spine and counter that forward bend on the way back up. And second, scrunching forward anatomically compresses lung capacity. Within no time, you'll need to stop to take a deep breath.



*Full extension at hip, knee and ankle is required to translate power from your upward movement to the ball.*



## 4 Triple Extension

Think of the power you generate in wall balls as similar to that of a thruster. In a thruster, you extend at the hip, knee and ankle (called “triple extension”) as you explode upward from the squat. That’s the way you should envision the upward movement of wall balls.

In translating power from your upward movement to the ball, full hip extension is critical (similar to a clean or snatch). As you ascend, focus on popping your hips at the top of the thrust.

But even if you fully extend at all three joints, you can still lose power you’ve generated by pausing before propelling the ball at the top of the squat. Be sure to immediately continue your upward movement by exploding with your arms just as you finish triple extension.

## 5 Squat Phase Mechanics

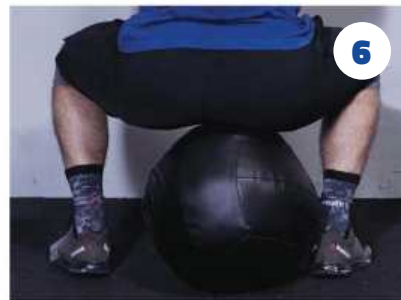
Think of the athletes you know who are freakish machines when performing wall balls. We’d bet they’re also the same athletes you know who can front-squat a house. There’s a reason for that.

If you have trouble front squatting, you’ll have trouble with your wall-ball technique. Indeed, the same cues coaches give for front squatting apply perfectly to the squat portion of wall balls. Keep your feet in a power position (about shoulder-width apart), shoulders back, chest high and feet flat, being sure to keep the weight in your heels.

Your descent in the squat should begin with hip flexion (hips back slightly), rather than knee flexion, and then move to hips down. Your knees will naturally bend, but if you’re focusing on keeping an upright torso, you’ll avoid bending forward or driving out of your toes.

## 6 Depth of Squat

The standard in wall balls, as you may know, is for the hip crease to break the plane of the knee joint in the squat. If you do not have good internal motor feedback on where that point is, practice with a ball placed behind you close to your legs so that when you reach a full squat, your hamstrings or buttocks make contact with it. That contact should then trigger your ascent.



But there’s something else to consider. The goal in the wall ball is to bounce out of the bottom of the squat and translate that momentum to the ball. That means that you will benefit from a squat that is as ballistic as possible. If you feel you can’t get a bounce until you’re too low (butt almost at the floor), then you’re wasting both movement and time. To remedy that, try shifting your feet out slightly. This will limit your depth and bring your hamstrings into play earlier, providing force for your ascent earlier.

## 7 “Absorb” the Ball

When the ball is coming off the target, concentrate on “absorbing” it into your descent. To do this, get your hands back into the “goblet position” quickly and begin descending as the ball reaches the height of your head.

Doing this, you catch the ball high, but more important, you’ll be able to use the ball’s weight to initiate a forceful and ballistic bounce at the bottom. Think of yourself as a human piston and mentally repeat, “Catch high, ride low.”





8

## Distance From the Wall

Your ability to efficiently perform much of the above may depend on whether you're standing the right distance away from the wall. Here's a good way to find out: Stand in front of the wall with the ball at chest height. With your hands in goblet position, reach forward until the ball touches the wall. This should be an appropriate distance. However, everyone has slightly different anthropometrics and biomechanics, so you may find that you need to adjust this slightly to be most efficient.

Another factor that may influence your personal distance is the "bounciness" of the ball you're using. If it bounces off the wall very little, you will need to be a bit closer to the wall. If it ricochets off the wall a great deal, you may need to slide back slightly.

Remember, if you're too far away from the wall, you will catch the ball too far forward. That will pull your hands down and your elbows into extension, causing you to scrunch forward and lose your upright torso.

9

## The Throw "Arch"

It often takes a while for CrossFit newbies to get a "feel" for the nuances of the wall-ball arch. They either throw the ball straight up or they power it in a straight line to the lower end of the target. Such throws are neither effective nor efficient.

To perform wall balls with an efficient wall-ball arch, two things must occur. First, the athlete must get a feel for the exact amount of upward force necessary during propulsion so the target is hit at the correct height, without the ball going higher than it needs to. Throwing the ball too high not only means wasting energy, but the addi-

tional distance the ball travels either before or after it hits the target also wastes time.

Second, athletes also must acquire a feel for how their fingers affect the arch of the ball. There is a subtle and gentle flexing of the fingers at the top of the throw that causes the ball to eventually curve ever so slightly toward the target. Practice different wrist and finger actions to help identify exactly what movements work best to develop an effective wall-ball arch with your unique biomechanics.

10

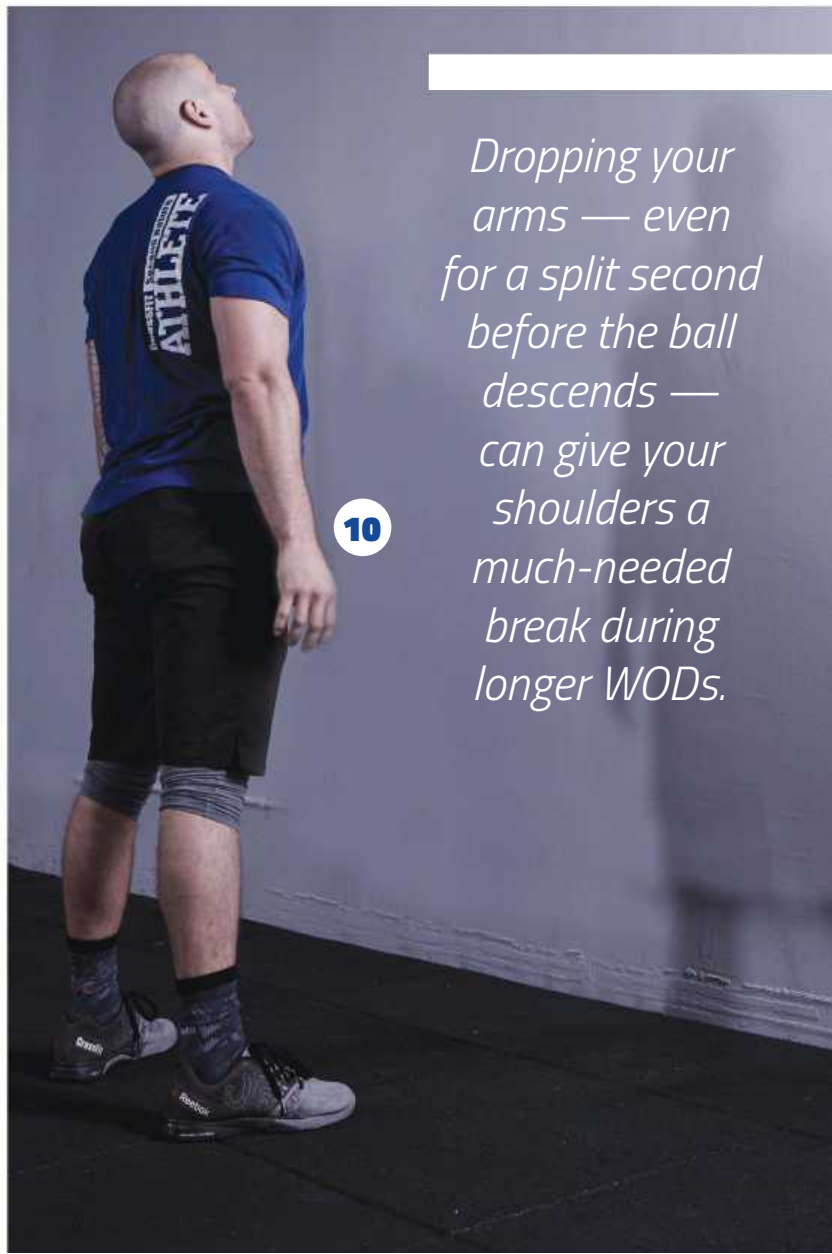
## Rest Your Arms

Critical to maximizing endurance in a wall-ball WOD is your ability to reduce fatigue in the muscles surrounding the shoulder joint. These muscles work when you el-

evate your upper extremities. So keeping your arms up for the entire length of your wall-ball session can be daunting and self-defeating.

Try this: Immediately after propelling the ball upward, let your arms drop back down. Of course, within a second, you will need to raise them again to catch the ball, but, believe it or not, that momentary relaxation does indeed make a difference in deltoid fatigue. Now, it does take practice and you will need to develop a good rhythm, but it can work to extend your endurance during a grueling chain of wall balls.

*Bob LeFavi, Ph.D., CSCS, USAW, CF-L1, is a professor of sports medicine at Armstrong State University in Georgia and co-owner of CrossFit GroundSpeed. He also competed in the 2013 Reebok CrossFit Games, Masters division.*



*Dropping your arms — even for a split second before the ball descends — can give your shoulders a much-needed break during longer WODs.*



# TRAINING FOR WALL BALLS

Besides good standard wall-ball practice sessions, there are other things you can do to enhance your wall-ball performance.

## » STRENGTH WORK

**Front Squat** As mentioned, wall balls use the same mechanics as the front squat. So if you have some biomechanical difficulty in the front squat, those same problems will transfer to wall balls. Do you have trouble keeping your heels down in a full front squat? Do you struggle to achieve at least full depth? Improving your front squat with training not only will improve your vertical power production in wall balls but also will reduce the metabolic cost involved, thereby improving cardiovascular endurance.

**Thrusters** Yeah, we know. You can never get enough thrusters, right? Still, you didn't need us to tell you that mechanically, thrusters use the same muscle groups in the same patterns as wall balls do. The focus of your thruster training for wall balls should be to reinforce a consistent depth of descent. That depth, even with a loaded thruster bar, should become automatic with training.

**Heavy Ball** Your box likely has medicine balls that are heavier than what you normally use in a WOD. By practicing with that markedly heavier ball, you employ the same neuromuscular strategy as a baseball batter who takes swings with a weighted donut on his bat. The focus with heavy-ball training should be to explode out of the bottom. If you can accentuate such explosion with a heavy ball, your explosion with a light ball will increase exponentially.



## » ENDURANCE WORK

**Interval Training** Develop your wall-ball endurance through repeated work/rest bouts. Here's a good strategy: On a day when you're rested, find the maximum number of unbroken wall balls you can do in a row. That then becomes your benchmark. For set one, try to hit that number, if you can (or come very close). Take a one-minute rest. After that minute, your goal is to hit 75 percent of that number, unbroken. Take a 45-second rest. Now, take the number of wall balls you just hit in set two, divide it in half and perform 10 sets of wall balls at that number with 10 seconds between each set (for a grand total of 12 sets). It's brutal, but it's a great way to assess whether your cardiovascular endurance may be a limiting factor for you in wall balls.

**Cardio Work** In the end, cardiovascular conditioning is vital to energy production in wall balls (think "Karen"). We cannot forget about or underestimate the importance of running, cycling, rowing and swimming to improve general metcons so your improved muscular force from strength training and your more efficient biomechanics can be realized. □



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SUMMER

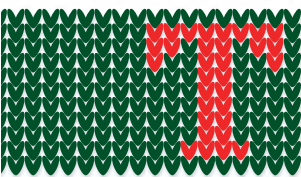
THE

HOLIDAYS

EVERY YEAR YOU TELL YOURSELF, "THIS YEAR IS GOING TO BE DIFFERENT." BUT THEN SUMMER COMES TO AN END, MOTIVATION TO LOOK GOOD IN A BATHING SUIT DISAPPEARS, AND YOU SUCCUMB TO ONE GLUTTONOUS CHOICE AFTER ANOTHER STRAIGHT THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS. EXCEPT, IT DOESN'T HAVE TO GO LIKE THAT.

BY ELKE NELSON, PH.D., CFLI





The first step to conquering the holidays is recognizing that your primary nemesis is the excuse. You know, how all of a sudden you allow yourself to sleep in, replace the MCT oil in your morning coffee with Baileys and polish off a half dozen of grandma's famous oatmeal cookies for breakfast. (She really does make the best cookies!) You've spent all year answering to your alarm clock, eating clean, and working hard in and out of the gym. The holidays are for letting go and enjoying all your favorite things, knowing you'll bounce back later.

Stop. No matter how you try to rationalize a poor decision, excuses are excuses and they will contribute to your demise over the holidays.

But still, the holidays *are* special. And they are a perfectly appropriate time to catch up on sleep, enjoy a cocktail with family and even indulge in one (OK, maybe two) of grandma's famous cookies. But the key lies in finding balance and not letting discipline go out the window just because it's the end of November. You remember from last year exactly how awful it feels to play catch-up? Here's how to make January 2016 different.

## On the Road

Traveling for the holidays can completely derail your endgame, but only if you let it. Whether you're driving, busing, training, flying or sailing to your destination, the change in routine and added seat time is not ideal. While it's impossible to completely

avoid the tribulations of travel, you can choose to be a road warrior rather than a complete sloth.

► **PACK HEALTHY SNACKS.** (Even if it means bringing along a cooler.) Keep it simple, delicious and nutritious by pairing carrots, celery and/or apples with your favorite nut butter (availa-

ble in single-serve packs). If you're a sucker for the crunch, whip up a quick batch of kale chips or create your own trail mix by throwing together some raw nuts, unsweetened dried fruit and high-quality dark chocolate.

► **STAY HYDRATED.** Bring along an eco-friendly refillable water bottle and fill it up once you're through security at the airport — or at restaurants, gas stations or anywhere else water is available.

► **KEEP ACTIVE.** If you own a jump rope, bring it with you and bang out 100 quick double-unders at each pit stop, including airport layovers. Always opt for the stairs and turn every bathroom stop into a five-minute jog-and-stretch session (where appropriate). Do as many walking lunges down the airplane aisle as you can get away with. And don't forget your lacrosse ball — sit on it to work through some knots while you're glued to the seat.



## Welcome Home!

You've arrived at your holiday destination and now the health-and-fitness challenges begin in earnest.

► **WORK OUT FIRST.** If you know your motivation dwindles as the day goes on, get your workout done first thing in the morning. A morning workout will prime you metabolically to better handle all those holiday indulgences.

► **MAKE IT A FAMILY EVENT.** It can be surprisingly fun (and hysterical) to gather everyone together for a group workout. Experiment with extra-en-

tertaining movement combinations like the bear crawl, crab walk, burpees, chair dips, jumping jacks, push-ups and air squats. Besides, when can you so easily indulge your coaching power trip?

► **DO YOUR HOMEWORK.** If you simply can't bring yourself to work out without stepping foot in a box, CrossFit has you taken care of. When you're visiting Grandma Ruth or Uncle Eddie, odds are there's a box within a few miles. Once you know where you're spending the holidays, do some re-

search online and find a likely prospect. Contact the owner to see what their requirements for drop-ins are and commit to attending a class. Then reward yourself with a new CrossFit T-shirt from the box that welcomed you. Sweat and souvenirs trump sugar bellies any day.

► **PREPARE FOR PRESSURE.** It's not uncommon for someone who is healthy and fit to get a lot of pressure from family members who do not share the same passions, especially when it comes to holiday noshing. Food, after all,



It can be surprisingly fun (and hysterical) to gather your family and friends together for a group workout.



becomes religion for some people. In one scenario, family may applaud you for skipping bread and cake; in others, you may be singled out, harassed and forced to defend your choices while being careful not to offend anyone else. But there is hope. Identify which meals are the most sen-

timental and “cheat”-worthy for the sake of the family experience and which you can seamlessly make clean (even if just for yourself). If it’s a special holiday dinner that mom makes only one day a year, enjoy all of it. If it’s a recurrent thing, like pumpkin pie after breakfast, lunch and dinner for

five days straight, hold your ground and abstain.  
Or if you’re feeling super motivated (or just want to see how deeply you can trick your family), consider creating a delicious and healthy replacement for some of your favorite holiday dishes. Try baking sweet po-



If you hold back too much, it could all backfire and end in a miserable mashed potatoes/stuffing/pumpkin pie/cookies binge that leaves you feeling sick and hopeless the next day.





tatoes and smother them in grass-fed butter (or ghee), sea salt and cinnamon instead of melted marshmallows. Swap mashed cauliflower — made with grass-fed butter (or ghee), sea salt and coconut milk — for mashed potatoes. Instead of green bean casserole, try Brussels sprouts roasted with bacon, apples and onions. And it should be no sweat to find a number of healthy, pumpkin-based dessert options worth exploring.

► **IF NOTHING ELSE, LEARN HOW TO TASTE.** If you can teach yourself to have just a taste of something and that behavior becomes routine, you could quite possibly have it all. The goal is to live in the moment with that first bite; everything after that tends to be mindless eating (and added inches on your waistband). If you love grandma's cookies that much, take a bite whenever you're craving something sweet, and you just might be able to make a single cookie last an entire day. If you can't imagine the holidays without stuffing — the real kind — but that meal isn't on your go-all-out

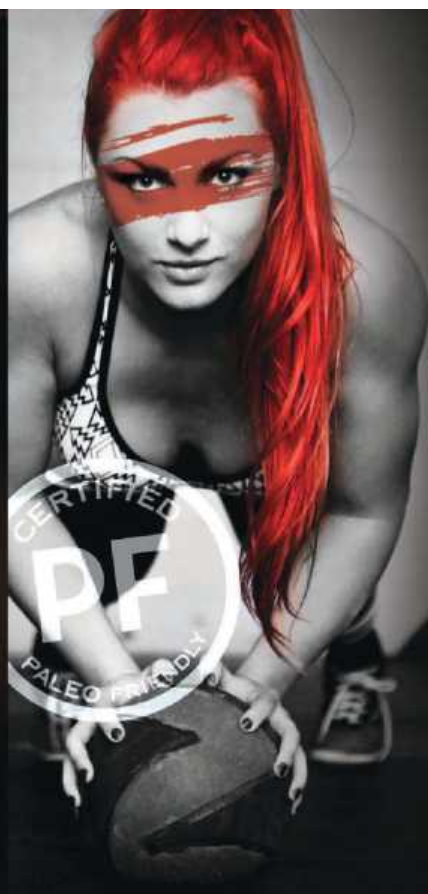
list, have a spoonful (or two). There's no reason not to enjoy a bite here and there. If you hold back too much, it could all backfire and end in a miserable mashed potatoes/stuffing/pumpkin pie/cookies binge that leaves you feeling sick and hopeless the next day. Remember, the farther you fall, the harder it is to bounce back.

► **DRINK SMARTER.** Maybe your family is pretty on board with clean eating but loves to drink — and you look forward to indulging with them every holiday season. While it's OK to occasionally indulge in alcohol, it's important to avoid sugary cocktails and limit your intake so that it, uh, doesn't interfere with your ability to work out the next day. Make sure to drink plenty of water in between anything alcoholic. Using soda water (aka club soda, not the same as tonic water) as a mixer is one way to avoid sugary liquids — and hydrate while you're still tossing 'em back. You should obviously allow yourself a "get out of jail free" card or two over the holidays, but don't let late-night drinking followed by

missed morning workouts become a regular thing.

► **TAKE YOUR SUPPLEMENTS.** The perfect combination of holidays and vacation often has one overlooked side effect: vitamin and supplement snubbing. Given that your diet and fitness are more than likely going to take a hit, wouldn't this be the worst time to cease taking any and all vitamins and supplements? It only takes a few minutes to throw your favorites — fish oil, vitamin D, probiotics, magnesium, zinc, protein powder — into zip-top bags. And if you're not into throwing pills and powders into a bag or you're hooked on unbaggageable liquid fish oil, companies have caught on and are developing travel-size versions of almost everything for your convenience. Again, no excuses.

So what's your January going to feel like? Whether you ring in the new year in a deconditioned, hungover, fatty stupor or hit the box on January 2 rested, fit and ready to hit some shiny new 2016 PRs is entirely up to you. □



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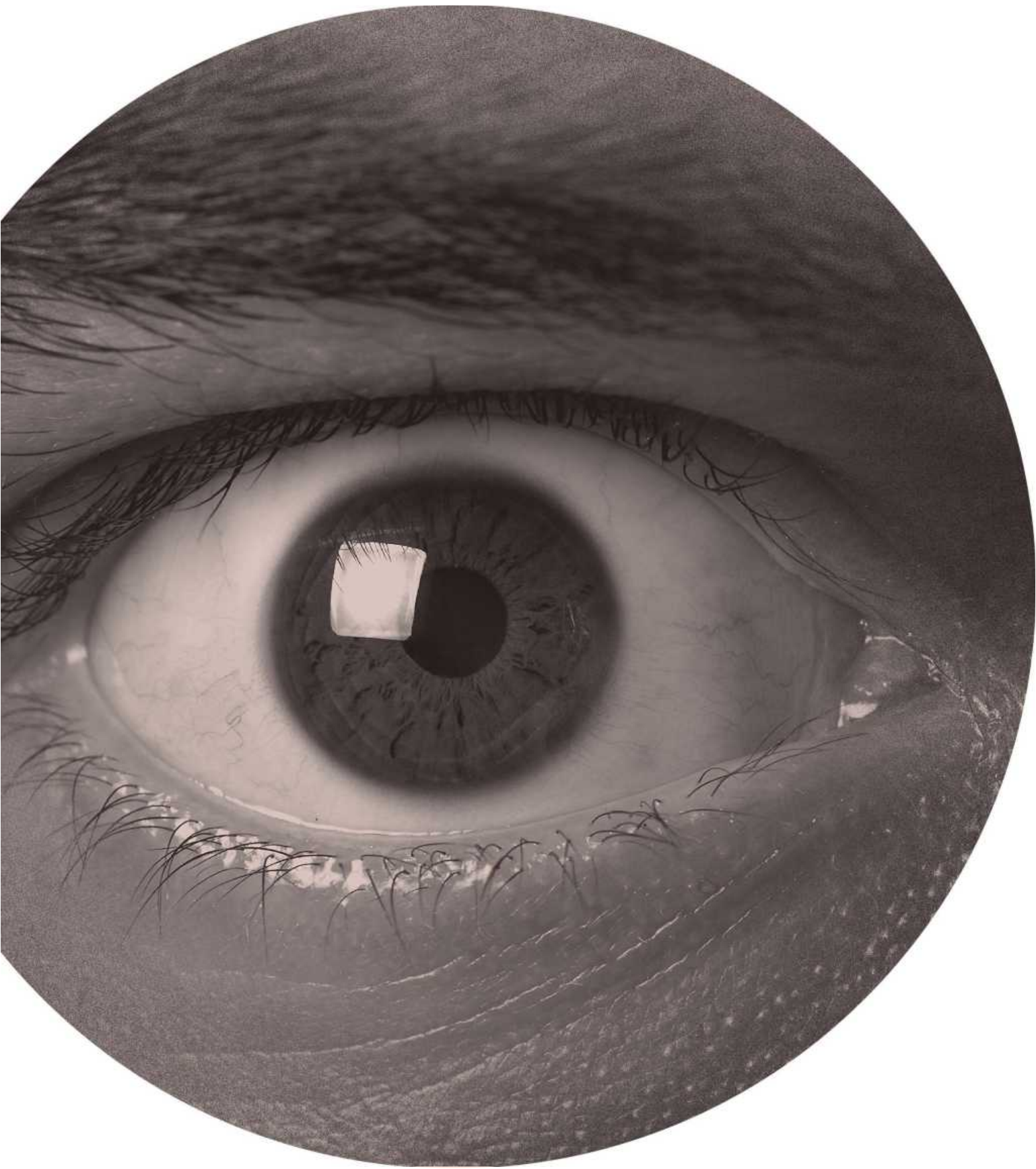
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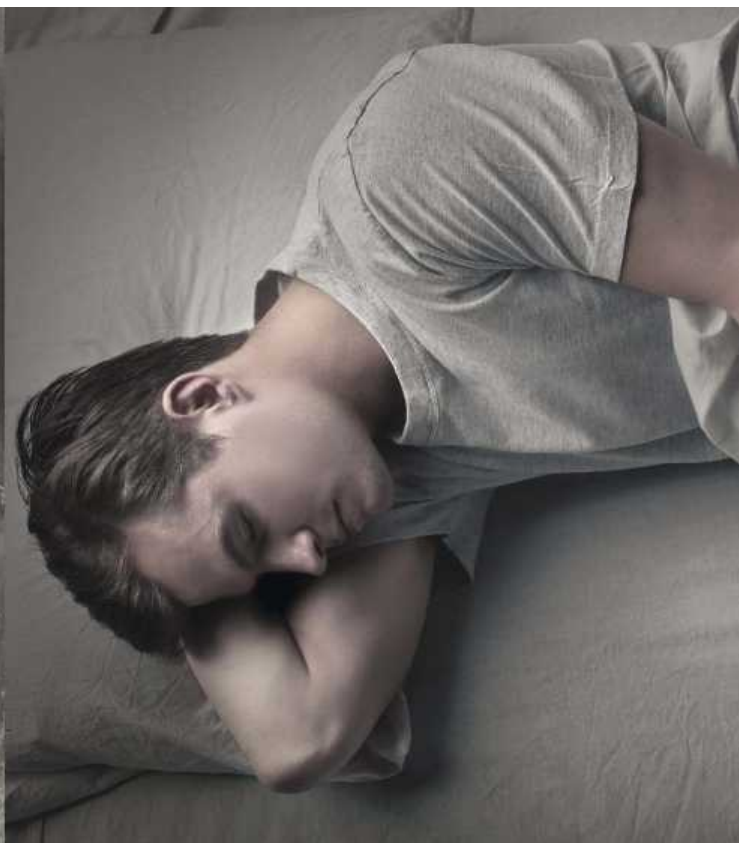
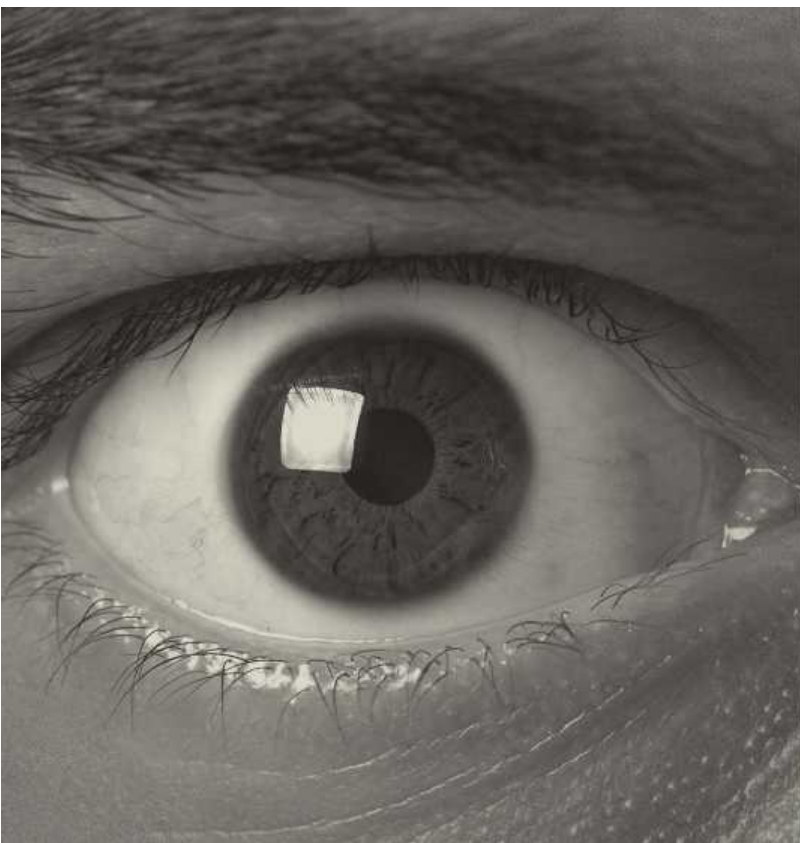






# REST UP

THE MOST  
OVERLOOKED  
FACTOR IN  
RECOVERY,  
**SLEEP**  
DESERVES  
A VAUNTED  
SPOT  
ALONGSIDE  
TRAINING AND  
NUTRITION  
PROTOCOLS.  
**BY CORY**  
McCARTNEY



You're beaten down from a nasty WOD, the kids are finally asleep and you've got half a season of *Game of Thrones* sitting on the DVR. Sleep? That's the last thing on your mind — and therein lies the problem.

CrossFitters stretch, foam-roll, do yoga and a number of other activities to enhance recovery. They'll pay meticulous attention to their diets and strength cycles, all for the goal of gaining an edge in everyday and competitive performance. Yet it's not activity but the lack thereof that's likely missing from most athletes' routines. "Athletes should absolutely be taking sleep seriously, just as seriously as any other component of health or performance," says Russell Rosenberg, Ph.D., D.ABSM, of NeuroTrials Research in Atlanta.

The baseline understanding is simple: Get a good night's rest and you wake up rejuvenated in body and mind, and you're better able to stay focused throughout the day. But there's more to sleep than just rest. During the deeper stages, growth hormone is released, blood supply to muscles increases, and

tissue growth and repair occur. Basically, sleep gives the body a bigger opportunity to bounce back than many of the recovery methods most CrossFitters subscribe to.

"This is where people don't really understand the full importance of sleep and recovery," Rosenberg says. "When you do sleep, it's a time for physical and mental recovery."

The mental aspect comes into play during REM cycles, which make up 25 percent of a night's sleep and promote daytime performance. Studies have shown that getting good sleep can lead to tennis players improving their serve, and one study conducted by researchers at Harvard, Stanford and the University of California, San Diego, in 1997 pored over 30 years of NFL game data and found that players who traveled across multiple time zones and experienced disruptions in sleep were 67 percent more likely to lose their games.

How much quality sleep you get also could mean the difference between hitting a one-rep max on a clean-and-jerk and making it through a difficult 21-

15-9 WOD. "It's absolutely essential for performance that all athletes take advantage of the fact that we know sleep has a significant role, as significant a role as certainly diet and some of these supplements do, on performance," Rosenberg says.

Regardless of whether they are exercising and how strenuous those activities are, adults need at least seven to nine hours of rest per night. But Cheri Mah, a research fellow at the University of California, San Francisco, Human Performance Center, has done studies on sleep extension that have shown that there are benefits to building on that baseline of time in bed to reduce what's called sleep debt.

Mah — who has worked with multiple collegiate and professional sports teams, including current NBA champions the Golden State Warriors — has done research that shows that when athletes acquire extra rest over multiple weeks, they create a cushion so that a few nights of inadequate rest won't have catastrophic fallout. In other words, going to bed early for a couple of days be-





fore a big comp won't necessarily cut it. "The big-picture take-home is that really adequate rested recovery, both sleep duration and sleep quality, needs to be prioritized every night," Mah says. "Not just the night before your competition or even two nights before."

It's a key finding because pre-event jitters can interfere with or even prevent sleep, and long-term sleep loss can have consequences. A 2015 review of existing research on sleep and performance that was published in *Sports Medicine* found that loss of sleep could hinder muscular recovery and cognitive performance, which can have devastating results on play the next day. Put bluntly: Your split jerk, both in weight and skill, could go to waste if sleep isn't given the proper respect.

Ultimately, understanding the worth of rest and developing the right mindset and optimizing the sleep environment are the goal for any athlete. The basic components of sleep hygiene are for the bedroom to be comfortable and free of light and noise. "I tell athletes to make it like a cave," Mah says.

But just as important as creating the proper sanctuary are those moments before your head even hits the pillow. Mah helps athletes create a sleep-management plan to integrate into their training regimens. Just as athletes naturally dissect every aspect of their approaches to strength and conditioning and nutrition, they come to see sleep as another component of their overall approach to sports. "So many athletes who are performing at a high level often have never considered the importance of sleep and really don't have strategies in place to assess and then to improve on their sleep and recovery," Mah says.

The first step is to develop a routine. Once athletes have assessed their own sleeping tendencies — how erratic are bed and wake times? How much sleep are they getting? Do patterns change from weekdays to weekends? — the next step is to create a transition period between the end of the day and sleep time. Mah recommends starting with 10 minutes dedicated to winding down, building to 30 minutes of reading

— "A real book," she says. "Not an iPad." — or doing yoga, stretching or breathing exercises that can become a behavioral modification to prepping body and mind for sleep.

For those athletes whose minds tend to race before bed, Mah builds in activities, like concentrating on their breaths, to help them relax before beginning that sleep-time routine. "Some of those behavioral modifications can be really helpful," she says. As is understanding which substances and activities can negatively impact sleep. Alcohol and caffeine are detrimental to quality rest, as are late nights on the television or tablets. So Jon Snow and that binge-watching session? They're going to have to wait.

"A lot of people watch TV the hour before bed, but they don't realize that bright light exposure can affect your sleep," Mah says. "So making that adjustment to not watching TV or using your laptop or exposing yourself to the bright light of your tablet — those things can also be helpful." □

# STUFFED BEEF ROLL WITH A HINT OF ESPRESSO

Like butter in your coffee, adding espresso to your meat is something worth exploring. Although not a recipe for the faint of heart, this unique dish will undoubtedly impress any guest.

BY ELKE S. NELSON, PH.D., CF-L1  
PHOTO BY ROBERT REIFF

## INGREDIENTS

**2 pounds grass-fed beef skirt steak (cut in half and pounded to ¼-inch thickness)**

### Rub:

½ tablespoon Himalayan pink sea salt  
¼ teaspoon allspice  
½ tablespoon finely ground espresso  
¼ teaspoon turmeric  
1 teaspoon chili powder  
1 teaspoon paprika  
½ teaspoon onion powder  
½ teaspoon garlic powder

### Stuffing:

1 tablespoon ghee (can substitute grass-fed butter, coconut ghee or coconut oil)  
½ teaspoon minced garlic  
1 sweet onion, chopped  
1 jalapeno, chopped  
1 large sweet potato, shredded  
1 teaspoon Himalayan pink sea salt  
½ bunch kale, chopped  
¼ teaspoon ginger

## DIRECTIONS

In a medium bowl, combine all the rub ingredients. Rinse your meat with cool water and pat dry with paper towels. Lay the meat out on a clean cutting board or sturdy tabletop and, using a meat tenderizer, pound until it's about ¼ thick. Sprinkle the rub all over the meat and rub until it's evenly distributed on all sides. Marinate in the refrigerator for one to two hours. While meat is marinating, add ghee to saute pan and place over medium heat. Add garlic and onion to the pan and cook for three to five minutes. Next, add jalapenos, sweet potatoes and salt. Stir, cover and cook for five more minutes before adding the kale and ginger. Once all ingredients have been added to the pan, cover and continue cooking for about 15 minutes, making sure to give

it a stir every five minutes. Once the sweet potatoes have softened, remove pan from heat and keep covered. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. After the meat is done marinating, remove it from the refrigerator and lay it back out on your cutting board/tabletop. Transfer the sweet-potato mixture to the meat so that it is evenly spread on top. Starting at one end of the meat, fold it onto itself (and the mixture) and continue folding over until it's completely rolled up. If it's easier, you also can cut the large piece of meat into smaller pieces and stuff/roll those each individually. Use toothpicks to hold the meat roll together. Transfer the meat roll to a baking sheet and cook for 20 to 30 minutes, or until meat is desired doneness. Serves 6.

## SERVING SUGGESTION

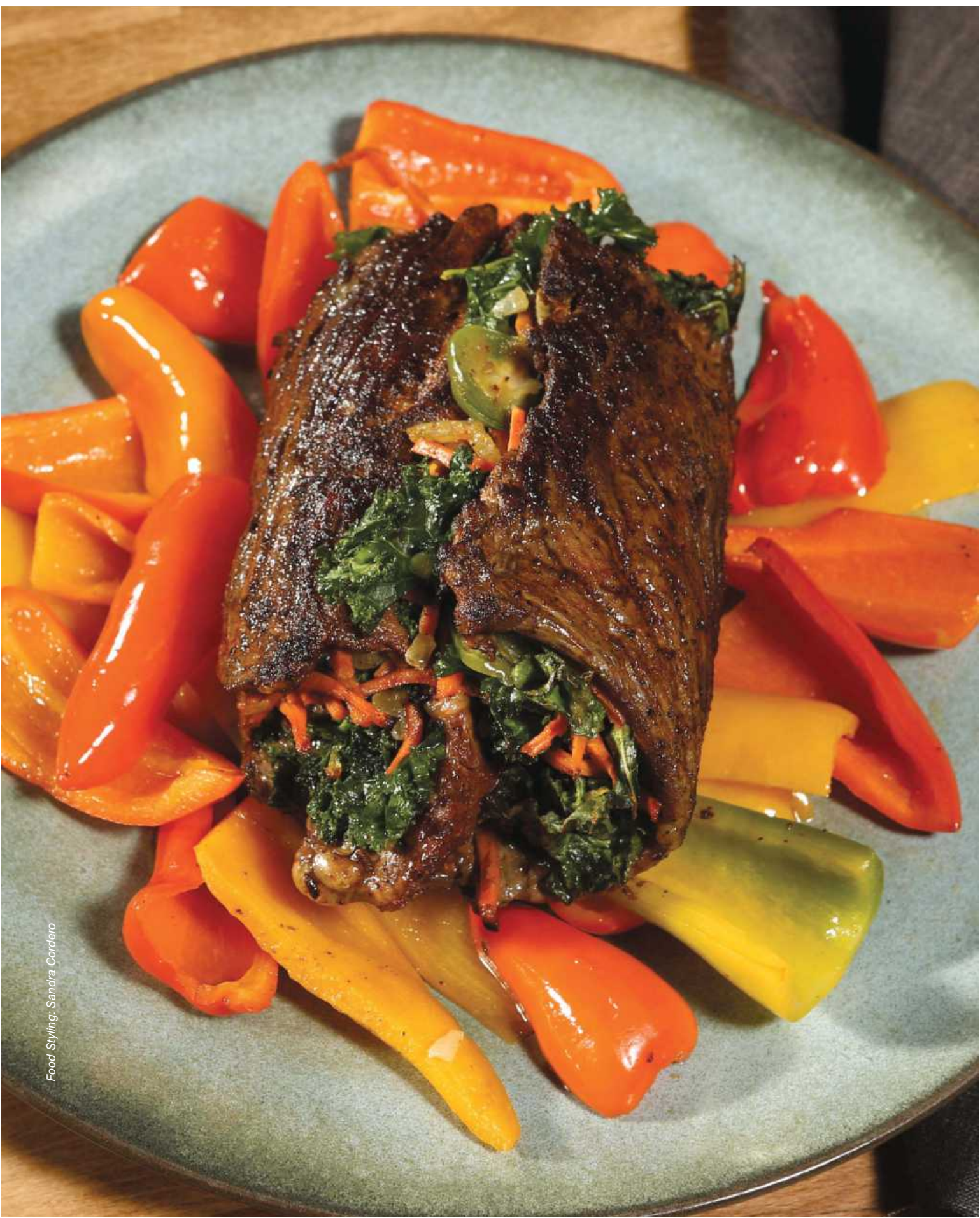
This dish goes great with a side of sauteed peppers.

## NUTRITION FACTS

(per serving): 351 calories, 26 grams protein, 14 grams carbs, 3 grams fiber, 21 grams fat











## COMMUNITY SPIRIT CROSSFIT FACES

Personal expressions of CrossFit from around the globe.

BY LARA MCGLASHAN, CPT

# DANNY LOPEZ-CALLEJA

*Danny Lopez-Calleja coaches 2013 CrossFit Games champion Sam Briggs.*

Three days a week at CrossFit Soul in Miami, clients come to train from a nearby drug treatment center on a pro-bono basis. The workouts replace their recreational therapy, and it's essentially a group WOD, though some of the higher-skilled Olympic lifts and barbell work are limited until the athletes advance.

For Soul's owner Danny Lopez-Calleja, the sessions aren't just a way to give back to the community. They're a vital link from his past to his present, a living reminder to those who walk through Soul's doors that you can get addicted to a whole new lifestyle.

"It's almost been a rebirth," says Lopez-Calleja, a recovering drug addict who is approaching 10 years clean and attended the same treatment center that sends its residents to Soul. "It's very easy when you're caught up in something to say you're different and your situation is different. However, there's always some piece to someone else's story that you can relate to. That's why I've been so outspoken about my experiences and try to help others — and it also helps keep me in check. I've created this identity as this person who is very outspoken about being drug-free, whose gym is a reflection of himself. And it helps keep me focused because everything I've built stands on me being drug-free and trying to be as positive as I can."

Lopez-Calleja found CrossFit in 2007 after a brief stint in a halfway house and opened Soul in '09 with 12 clients. Today, it has upward of 300 athletes, including American Open weightlifters, National Pro Grid League athletes and former CrossFit Games champion Sam Briggs, who sought out Lo-

pez-Calleja — part of CrossFit Weightlifting's staff — as her personal weightlifting coach.

There are also a lot of athletes at Soul who are in recovery, who flocked to the well-established box after hearing Lopez-Calleja and others speak on the radio or TV as part of the punk rock Straight Edge movement. Lopez-Calleja took on an intern who was doing a 30-day drug-free challenge, and today he's celebrating three years clean. "Having all those guys around the gym keeps everyone in check," Lopez-Calleja says. "It's like a support system. We're very vocal about it, we don't shy from talking about it openly."

Lopez-Calleja, who became addicted to drugs at any early age, knows how exercise can be perceived by some crowds and hopes CrossFit can help break that mold. "When I was getting clean, at first [working out] wasn't something I was interested in," he says. "I thought it was a jock thing. What our mission is with those guys [from the treatment center] is to show them you can still have these different interests. Not all training has to be for jocks."

"We look at our brand of CrossFit as the punk rock of fitness. When I first found CrossFit, you had to do a lot of research online; it took the same drive that researching punk music did as a kid. We like to think we've stayed true to that, and while the space keeps growing, we try to stay as true to our roots as humanly possible because that's what introduced us to this world."





## JESSICA ANDERSON

In the summer of 2013, Jessica Anderson was on a vacation in the Smoky Mountains and wanted to see a natural waterfall. But when her group did find one, the 1½-mile hike was too much for the 365-pound Anderson to physically handle and she had to stay back. When Anderson returned home, she vowed to never let her weight get in the way again.

So on August 12, 2014, after spending a year doing CrossFit-style workouts with a personal trainer, Anderson joined an affiliate. Today, she's 175 pounds slimmer.

"I think now, *How did I ever let myself go that far?*" says Anderson, a former high school athlete who attributes her rising weight to a motorcycle wreck and her dad being diagnosed with cancer. "How did I ever just abandon my body and not care and gain that much weight? I get frustrated because I'm competitive, and I have to realize that even though I've been doing CrossFit for a year, it might take me a little longer to get all the movements down because I'm coming from being a really out-of-shape obese person. My gym-mates have to remind me how far I've come."

It's pretty darn far. Anderson, who goes to CrossFit Mutare (Louisiana) six days a week, can back-squat 280 pounds and competed in her first Rx competition in May. She has learned the importance of clean eating, the value of carbs and that it's OK to still treat yourself once in a while, too. "Before, I might have been hung up on my thighs being skinny, but now I'm like, 'These thighs that can't fit into

women's [size 4 or 6] jeans can help move a sled 200 meters,'" Anderson says. "I'm cool with being a little muscular and being able to do all the things I'm able to do. It's taught me to appreciate my body. I still want to lose a few pounds, but my body has been rearranged so differently in the past year, it's unreal."

Now Anderson is hoping to help others experience a similar effect. The 32-year-old has been interning at Mutare and hopes to save up enough money to take CrossFit's Level-1 Certificate Course soon. "The writing's on the wall for me," she says. "I may never make it to Regionals, but I want to go on and be a coach. When we have new folks come in, I tell them to just have fun, keep coming and be consistent. I do say, 'I've been where you're at, don't give up. And give us four to five days a week and you will start seeing results.'"

It's the same message that Mutare co-owner Dana Coya, who died of melanoma on October 27, 2014, gave Anderson when she first joined the box. "She was the reason I joined," Anderson says of Coya, with whom she bonded because both women were former softball players. "Here was this strong female who had been to Regionals, and I thought it was so cool and I could really learn a lot from her."

But the most essential piece of advice Anderson can give is simple: "I just want people to know you are never too obese to start working out." □



## COMMUNITY SPIRIT MASTERING THE BOX

Personal expressions of CrossFit  
from around the globe.

BY LARA MCGLASHAN, CPT

# THE 12 DAYS OF CROSSFIT

*On the first day of CrossFit, my body gave to me ... a nagging pain in my knee.*

*On the second day of CrossFit, my body gave to me ... two sore traps and a nagging pain in my knee.*

*On the third day of CrossFit, my body gave to me ... three calluses on my palm, two sore traps ...*

**O**K, enough complaining.

A retired friend of mine had a rule: When she and her friends would go to lunch, they were allowed a collective total of five minutes to discuss their aches, pains, wrinkles and flatulence, then they had to move on to other topics. That, in my opinion, is how the world should work.

Yet it's easy to fall into a negative mindset as you get older. The warranties on your bodyparts begin to expire and the pressures of being a grown-up drain your superpowers. When you're young, you have things to look forward to, milestones that are exciting, like hitting the double digits when you turn 10, taking summer vacation at Camp Wannabe Somewhere Else, learning to drive, turning 21, going to college, learning not to "inhale," getting a girlfriend/boyfriend and finally getting laid. (Items listed don't necessarily occur in that order.)

But somewhere around 30, you sort of hit cruise control and coast into middle age, trying not to crash and burn as you plod past the not-so-fun milestones like getting a real job, paying taxes, turning 40 (or 50 or 60), growing hair in formerly hairless parts, losing hair in formerly hairy parts, getting your first AARP magazine, and so on and so on. Of course, there are fun times in there, too, (having a baby, a family, a home, a fabulous Parisian vacation), but often the compounding stress of life overshadows those good times.

Truth: It's up to you to reclaim your powers of positivity and purposely make the fun happen.

What that means in the box is pushing your limits, setting milestones to reach and tracking your progress as you move through your journey. In my box, there's a whiteboard where you can post your monthly accomplishments, and invariably they are as diverse as doing a legless rope climb to finally doing a 12-inch box jump. Those milestones are then posted

online for the world to share and admire, because you know, that 12-inch box jump belongs to everyone, since we all started there at one point and passed that marker with a shit-eating grin.

Yes, you'll have aches and pains and little niggling injuries that will remind you that you're no longer a spring chicken, but try your best not to let those detour your goals. Listen to your body, of course (nothing is worth getting injured over), and put your one-rep-max squat on hold if your knee is acting up, focusing instead on your muscle-ups. Then once you've accumulated 12 goals, you can be a geek like me and slot your achievements into a song like this one. Singing along is mandatory. (You know you want to anyhow!)

*On the 12th day of CrossFit, my body gave to me:*

*12 months of WOD-ing*

*11 kipping ring dips*

*10 38-inch box jumps*

*9 walking handstand steps*

*8 running rope climbs*

*A sub-7-minute mile*

*6 strict handstand push-ups*

*5 new friends!*

*4 pounds of muscle gained*

*A 3-rep squat max*

*2 Team Spartan Races*

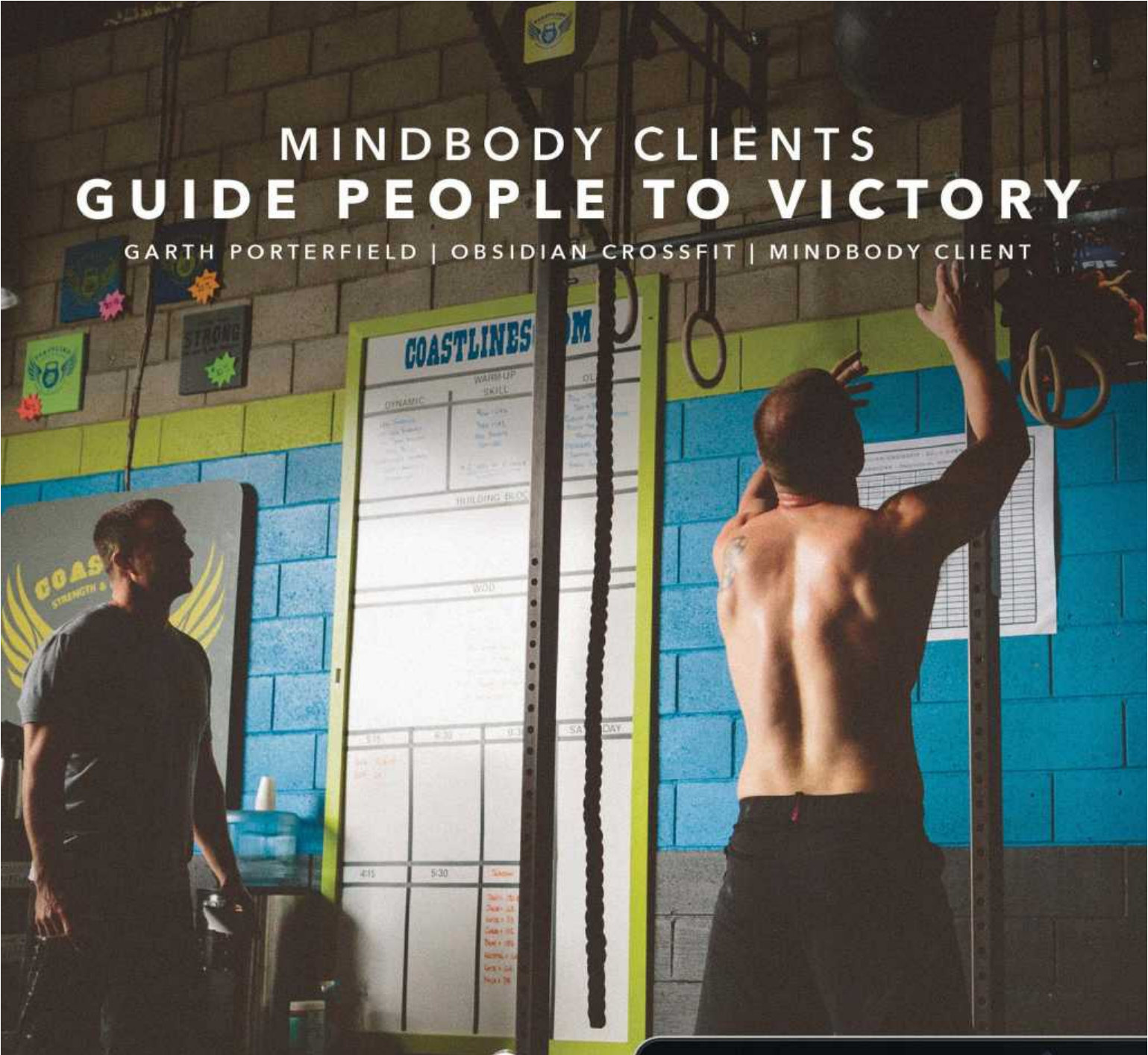
*And a muscle-up on the rings! ▢*





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COMMUNITY SPIRIT

**LADIES FIRST**

By Abi Reiland, CF-L1

## MUSCLE MASS: A WOMAN'S BEST FRIEND

**F**or decades, cardio has been a major focus for most women in the fitness world. As a means to a healthier heart and increased weight loss, women gravitated toward regimens like running, ellipticals and step classes, often neglecting any intentional strength development. Recent years have put a spotlight on female strength training, dismissing the idea that a woman who lifts weights will look manly. Most women in the CrossFit community understand that building muscle mass is hugely beneficial, and in combination with high-intensity interval training, it can provide amazing physical results. We hear that “strong is the new skinny” and “strength is beauty,” but there’s so much more to it than exterior transformation and a healthy appearance. So what real benefits can the average woman expect from incorporating strength training into her regular activities?

**FAT LOSS.** Women talk a lot about weight loss, but they’re really talking about fat. We all have it (and *have* to have it to survive), but none of us are huge fans of having an excess of it. It’s common to hear that muscle weighs more than fat, which is technically not accurate. Rather, a pound of fat takes up four times the space of a pound of muscle tissue. So not every woman might expect major weight loss with a strength program, but what she *can* expect is fat loss. An increase in muscle mass brings with it an increase in metabolism. A female who has significant muscle mass burns more calories (and fat) even while she isn’t working than a woman with minimal muscle mass.

**STRENGTH.** It seems obvious, right? If you’re strength training, you should see improvements in strength. But it’s not limited to your major muscle groups. Strength training also improves bone density (thus increasing bone strength) and improves overall strength in connective tissues. And though we often forget that our heart is a muscle, it too gets stronger and healthier through the incorporation of strength training.

**YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.** It might not be exactly what you had in mind, but strength training can serve as a bit of magic when



it comes to staying young. At about age 30, muscle mass begins to deteriorate. As we get older, our cells require more time to repair, which is why people seem to get smaller and shorter and weaker as they approach their later years. Building muscle can slow that loss, plus it can reduce the risk of injury, which keeps those cells happier and healthier. Lifting can serve as a killer method for prevention, if you’re into keeping your youthful functioning and look.

**BEAUTIFUL BODY.** There is no one way to define beauty. But there’s also no denying that a healthy body (regardless of shape or size) is a beautiful body. Muscle mass, derived from strength training, is the only tissue with the ability to shape and tone one’s body. So building that muscle mass gives any woman her best bet at achieving the shape she was made to rock.

Regardless of your goals, it’s evident that strength training builds a stronger foundation for living life to the best of your ability. So grab those barbells, ladies, and begin (or continue!) the pursuit of your potential. **□**

*Abi Reiland, CF-L1, is co-owner of and trainer at CrossFit 8035 and the director of The MAT Games and The CF Circus. Find more at her blog [prettyngritty.com](http://prettyngritty.com).*

Photo by Cory Sorensen



A woman in a grey tank top and black leggings is in mid-air, jumping over a wooden box. A man in an orange tank top and black shorts is also in mid-air, jumping over a larger wooden box. The background is a light-colored wall with diagonal stripes.

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# #AimFitness

# WOM

## GET A GRIP, WORK YOUR HIPS

Address a pair of crucial CrossFit elements with this interval-based metcon.

By Joe Wuebben

### THE WORKOUT

EMOM for 12 minutes:

Even minutes: Max reps in 20 seconds of high hang power cleans (80 percent of 1RM)

Odd minutes: Max reps in 20 seconds of toes-to-bars

#### SCALING SOLUTIONS

*High hang power clean:*

Dial back the weight or sub with Russian kettlebell swings.

*Toes-to-bar:*

Sub with knees-to-elbows, knees-to-triceps, knees-to-chest, hanging knee raises, V-ups, tuck-ups or sit-ups.

#### CLASSIFIER

"I like this workout to focus more on the technical aspects than the score," Craig Hysell says. "But if you're looking for something to shoot for, don't let go of the barbell [during cleans] or pull-up bar [during toes-to-bars] for 20 seconds on each round. Rep counts of 30-plus hang power cleans and 60-plus toes-to-bars is a great goal."

#### COACH SAYS

**1. GO ALL-OUT:** No need to pace yourself during the work intervals. "The goal of this EMOM is to max out on intensity and reps for 20 seconds and then recover as much as possible in the remaining 40," Hysell says.

**2. CHOOSE WEIGHT WISELY:** "If you don't have a power clean 1RM, choose a weight that makes you slightly nervous and that you can move with spot-on technique," he says.

**3. KEEP PROGRESSING:** In the weeks following this workout, Hysell recommends repeating the same EMOM format (12 minutes, 20 seconds max reps) but increasing weight slightly on the cleans and extending range of motion, like so: hang power clean at 85 percent of power clean 1RM in week two, power clean at 90 percent of 1RM in week three. (Toes-to-bar prescription remains the same throughout.) □

There are two things you can never have too much of: hip power and grip strength. This particular WOD, designed by Craig Hysell at Conviction Training Facility in Hilton Head, South Carolina, caters to both via intervals in a high-intensity EMOM.

"This workout focuses on powerful hip extension and hip flexion while producing grip strength strong enough to turn coal into diamonds," Hysell says. "Combining weightlifting and gymnastics is classic CrossFit. Intervals allow for a keenly focused practice of both aspects. Regarding cleans, going from the high hang at 80 percent one-rep max ensures that the bar must come off the hips with the requisite velocity, the bar path must be close and back, the knees must re-bend in the receiving position and the elbows must move upward sharply."

Any preconceived notions you have about EMOMs only being for strength, not conditioning, will end with this workout, which "targets speed, stamina, strength, power, balance, agility, accuracy and coordination," Hysell says. "For many athletes, cardiorespiratory endurance will also be a factor. All 10 general skills are met in this metcon."

*Craig Hysell is owner and head coach of Conviction Training Facility (aka CrossFit Hilton Head) in Hilton Head, South Carolina (convictiontraining.com). He holds six different CrossFit certifications (including a Level-2) as well as USA Weightlifting Level-1 Sports Performance Coach.*



A female CrossFit athlete is shown in the middle of a clean and jerk lift. She is wearing a yellow and green Reebok singlet, white shorts, a pink and black lifting belt, and black knee sleeves. She is holding a barbell with blue CrossFit Rogue plates above her head with both arms. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with other athletes and equipment.

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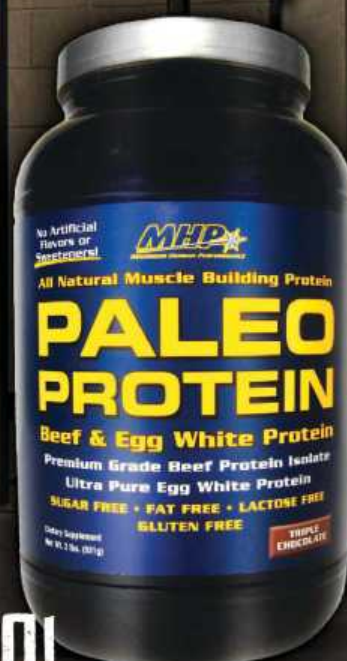
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